



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

is of little practical benefit to define a concept of sin in such a way as never to be able to tell where it applies. Nor is it possible for the sinner to pronounce judgment on himself; for (to adopt the author's terminology) he may have psychically a consciousness of sin although psychologically and in the sight of God he is no sinner. Here again, the concept may give relief to over-sensitive consciences; but if neither the man himself nor another can surely apply the concept, it might seem better to drop the term altogether instead of taking such pains to define it. But here we come to the heart of the matter. Dr. Tennant holds that there must be such a thing as sin because church doctrine and the Bible speak of it, and hence it is necessary to define the term accurately that we may understand both it and the context of revealed truth in which it is contained. This indicates a radical squint in the book, of which the author seems quite unaware. It would seem that the concept should be derived from the use of the term in the context of revelation, defined, that is, mainly by exegesis applied to the Scriptures and the Symbols of the Church; but the author grants that Paul has two inconsistent ideas as to sin, and admits that usually Christian thinkers have worked on a false theory. Hence the meaning of sin in its context of revelation is to be corrected by ethical reflection governed by our present moral standards and ideals. The dilemma is this: if a doctrine of sin is part of revealed truth, the definition of the term should be sought only in the revelation; if not, then in view of the many different meanings which the term carries and the resulting difficulties of comprehension, perhaps it would be well to describe accurately the moral experience with which one proposes to deal, instead of trying to define a concept, especially as there is little hope that the definition will be unanimously adopted and consistently employed even by theologians.

W. W. FENN.

CAMBRIDGE.

THE EARLY PERSECUTIONS OF THE CHRISTIANS. LEON HARDY CANFIELD, Ph.D. Columbia University Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law. LV, 2. 1913. Pp. 215. \$1.50.

In this interesting study Dr. Canfield reviews with care and thoroughness the whole material for the history of the so-called Christian persecutions down to the close of the reign of Hadrian. He accepts as true what has long been the general conclusion of scholars, that the attitude of the Roman government towards alleged Christians was not definitely determined until a fairly late

date. He inclines to set this date at the time of Trajan, and to attach great and decisive importance to that emperor's famous rescript in reply to Pliny's inquiries. Down to this time he thinks that what appear as "persecutions" were measures of ordinary police administration, taken to meet popular demands and implying that Christians were on many accounts objects of general dislike, but were not, as a religious body, subject to any specific legal penalty. After Trajan, however, there was at least a precedent, and the mere name of "Christian" sufficed as a basis for action in a specific case. This furnishes a workable hypothesis from which to proceed to a study of the more notable reported cases of procedure against Christians, from Nero to Hadrian's letter to the provincial official Minucius Fundanus, the genuineness of which Dr. Canfield accepts after a careful examination of the arguments for and against it.

It was distinctly worth while, in view of all that has been written in recent years, to bring together in brief compass the original material and to summarize the opinions based upon it, if only to show once again how meagre and fragmentary this material is, and how impossible it is, therefore, to reach any very solid conclusions as to the exact relation of the parties concerned. Dr. Canfield leaves us in no doubt as to his opinion on every point of controversy, but we could wish that he had seen fit to examine also the motives which have determined the attitude of modern writers on these points. It is not quite enough to say of M. Allard that he is "very conservative" and of M. Aubé that he is "very radical." It is important to know what these terms mean. It is essential to any real understanding of a writer's opinion to know, not merely his formal arguments on specific questions of text criticism, but the underlying motive which may have determined his opinion in advance. Throughout these discussions about the persecutions there runs the thread of an ardent and sincere desire, on the one side, to view all the evidence as bearing upon the glory of the martyred saints, and, on the other, to counteract this tendency by neglecting or minimizing the importance of any such consideration. Dr. Canfield seems intentionally to avoid all allusion to this line of demarcation. Perhaps he regarded it as lying outside the object of his study; but in any case this omission leaves his problem hanging in the air quite as hopelessly as ever. It still remains a puzzle to the modern student, as it was to Tertullian himself, why, if the "Name" implied crimes, the Christians were not to be punished for these crimes, and if it did not, why they were to be punished at all.